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FROM : Department of State

DATE:

 SUBJECT : World Population Year and World Population
 Conference

REF : State 171206, September 19, 1972

JOINT STATE/AID/USIA MESSAGE

 FOR AMBASSADORS, USAID DIRECTORS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
 OFFICERS, AND POPULATION OFFICERS

As indicated in the reftel, 1974 has been designated by the UNGA as World Population Year (WPY) and a World Population Conference (WPC) has been convoked by the UN Economic and Social Council to be held in August of that year.

The President in his May 3 Report to the Congress on Foreign Policy said of the Year and Conference:

"In order to focus international attention on the vital problem of world population growth, the United Nations has designated next year as World Population Year. A World Population Conference has been called for August 1974. I believe information and action programs undertaken as part of the observance can be a valuable means of furthering appreciation of population problems and of generating more resolute action by nations to solve them. The United States will cooperate fully with the United Nations in

Enclosures:

As listed page 8.

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observing the year and working to make the World Population Conference a success.

"It is imperative that the nations of the world reach agreement on means for dealing effectively with this global problem."

We regard rapid world population growth as one of the most serious problems facing mankind and consider both the Year and the Conference as of great importance for the attainment of US objectives:

-- to help promote a wide understanding of the problem and the need for action to deal with it on the part of government leaders and the public throughout the world;

-- to encourage as many countries as possible to adopt a policy of reducing rapid population growth;

-- to institute effective programs to carry out this objective with both bilateral and multilateral support, if needed.

The purpose of this airgram is to provide additional background information and material and current guidance both for discussions with government officials and for stimulating appropriate media coverage.

The World Population Year

The General Assembly Resolution is enclosed.

The purpose of the Year is to focus world-wide attention on population matters in order to accelerate, widen and deepen understanding of these matters, particularly in relation to economic development and to those elements of social progress which affect the quality of life of individuals.

The UN has identified five major objectives for the Year:

1. Improving knowledge of the facts on population trends and prospects.

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2. Arousing greater awareness of the problems and implications of these facts as they affect economic and social development, environment and the quality of life on the planet.

3. Promoting effective education on population, family life and reproductive functions, both within and without the educational system.

4. Discussing plans and policies affecting population growth.

5. Expanding international cooperation and assistance in population matters.

The UNGA Resolution calls on the Secretary General to prepare an appropriate and detailed program of measures and activities to be undertaken by the United Nations during 1974 and invites all Member states to both assist in these preparations and participate fully in the activities connected with the year itself.

The SYG has urged that Member governments set in motion the broadest and most comprehensive possible plans both to participate in the World Population Year's activities and to implement and further in their respective nations the spirit behind these activities.

ECOSOC has given the UN Fund for Population Activities responsibility for promotional activities for the Year. It is, of course, up to the governments themselves and to concerned private organizations to decide what actions and programs should be undertaken to observe the Year.

The general approach of the UNFPA to the Year goes far beyond ceremonial observance. It will promote population and family planning activities including information and education programs at the national and local levels with the purpose of strengthening national action programs. The attention of Population Officers is invited to the report of the Executive Director of the UNFPA to the UN Population Commission on his program for this year.

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These programs, which will be coordinated and to some extent funded by the UNFPA, will be the primary responsibility of several different UN agencies, including FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WHO and the UNDP. Private organizations such as International Planned Parenthood Federation will also participate.

These public relations efforts will largely involve the use of existing channels and techniques maintained by each of these bodies to facilitate distribution and implementation to more specialized Year-related films, pamphlets and activities.

Within the US a major domestic effort is being undertaken primarily by private organizations to promote information and education programs in support of the Year. The Department, AID and HEW plan to encourage and supplement these private efforts. A number of private organizations, such as IPPF, the Population Council, the Population Crisis Committee, are also working through their affiliates or connections abroad to promote the Year.

Action requested: The USG has actively participated in the development of the WPY concept. We want the Year to result in stimulating information programs and population/FP activities to a greater degree than would otherwise have occurred--both for their intrinsic value and as a means of creating support for a more far-reaching World Population Plan of Action than might otherwise be the case. Wherever country team believes conditions permit, the mission is requested to:

a. Discuss the matter with local UN officials, particularly the UNDP Resident Representative, the UN Information Officer and any UN officials engaged in family planning activities, both to ascertain what steps are being planned to promote observance of the Year and to suggest that UN officials encourage the local government to undertake specific projects in observance of the Year, including expanded public information and education programs.

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b. Discuss the matter with local officials to encourage them to consult with UN officials (para. a. above) with respect to projects and assistance that may be available in the materials referred to above as may be useful.

c. The mission is also requested to use the existence of the WPY as an opportunity for encouraging advances in population/FP activities where that is practicable.

d. The USIS is also requested to give special attention to population matters in support of the observance of the WPY and to make material available to local media as practicable.

e. Information regarding attitudes and activities of local governments for the observance of the WPY should be reported to the Department.

The World Population Conference

The Conference is scheduled to take place in August 1974. The ECOSOC at its recent session accepted the invitation of Romania to host the Conference in Bucharest.

The agenda consists of the following items:

1. Recent population trends and future prospects.
2. Relations between population change and economic and social development.
3. Relations between population, resources and environment.
4. Population, family and human rights and well-being.
5. World Population Plan of Action.

Prior to the Conference, four symposia, sponsored by the UN and dealing with topics on the agenda, will be held as follows:

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1. Population and Development, Cairo 4-14 June 1973.
2. Population, Resources and the Environment, Stockholm 24 September - 5 October 1973.
3. Population and the Family, Honolulu 6-15 August 1973.
4. Population and Human Rights, The Hague January 1974.

The participants at each symposium will be approximately 25 experts from various countries, selected by the UN, and will attend in their individual capacities. The results of the symposia will be made available to the Conference.

Since the Conference is for governments, separate arrangements are being made to permit parallel activities by NGOs. The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations, an unofficial organization which represents over 500 NGOs accredited to ECOSOC, has been selected to organize a Forum (or Tribune) to be held simultaneously with the Conference to provide organizations and individuals with the opportunity to gather and to express and discuss their views. This will be completely separate from the Conference and separately and privately financed.

By far the most important matter to be considered at the Conference from the US point of view is the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA). It seems likely that this WPPA will be the principal product of the Conference. A draft of such a plan is to be prepared by the UNSYG with the assistance of a Panel of Experts. It will be reviewed by the UN Population Commission before its transmittal to governments by May 30, 1974.

The US position as to the content of such a plan is being developed; our preliminary thinking is that it should be placed in the broad context of quality of life, human rights and economic and social development. We hope it will include a brief statement of agreed principles plus sets of specific recommendations for governments, UN agencies, NGOs

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and individuals for world-wide goals (stated in general terms) in the fields of demography, research, family planning services, training, education, environment, migration, urbanization and other functions related to population, population policy and national and international organization. We do not envisage that the outcome of the Conference will be in treaty form or other legally binding instrument. Given the great diversity of situations, it is likely that recommendations and standards will have to be couched in terms recognizing the need for flexible application according to local situations.

An Interagency Committee for the World Population Conference has been established to coordinate the preparation of US positions for the Conference.

Action requested: No specific action regarding the Conference is requested for the present. However, the above information may be drawn upon if inquiries are made by local officials. Any information regarding attitudes and views of the local government towards the Conference and the World Population Plan of Action should, of course, be reported to the Department.

Questions missions have concerning the Year and Conference are specifically invited. Additional circulars will be sent from time to time in order to keep missions informed..

Coordination

The office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary for Population Matters in State (S/PM) has been assigned responsibility for coordinating all matters concerning US participation in the World Population Year and the World Population Conference.

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Background Information

Several documents relating to the Year and Conference are enclosed:

1. Excerpt on Population from President's Report to Congress on Foreign Policy.
2. Excerpt on Population from Secretary's Report to Congress on Foreign Policy.
3. UNGA Resolution on World Population Year.
4. ECOSOC Resolution on World Population Conference.
5. UN SYG's Statement.
6. UNFPA circular on World Population Year.
7. Report of Executive Director of UNFPA to Population Commission re Plans for World Population Year.

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